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(54) A habitat structure for spiders and insects

(57) A spider's habitat structure comprises a transparent casing 10 and an opaque, removable cover 30 for placement over the casing. The casing has an access aperture for the spiders and it is adapted to be secured to a wall, tree or the like.

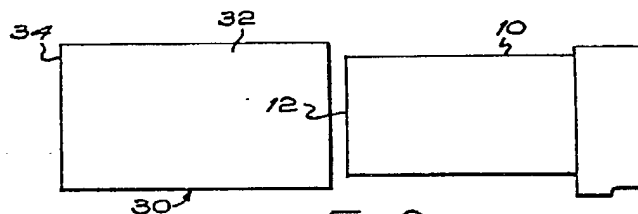
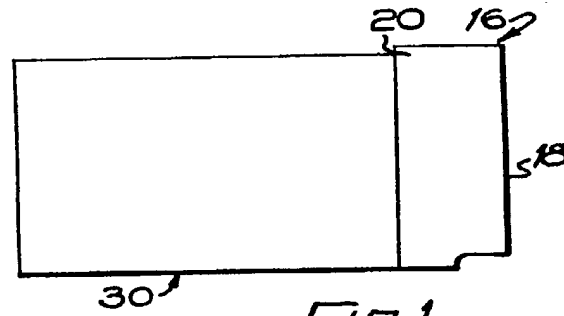
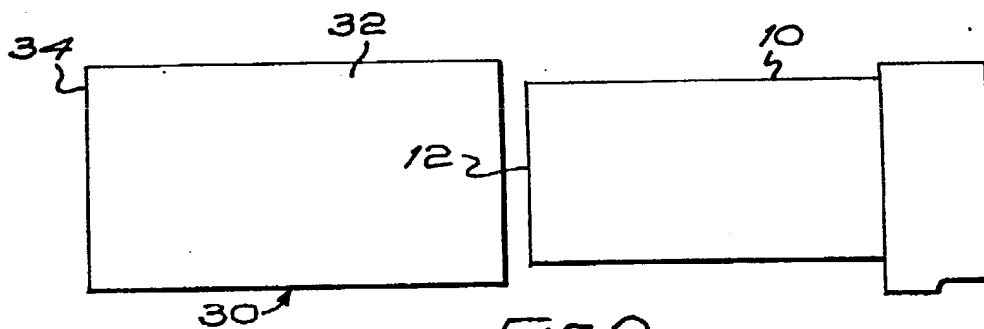
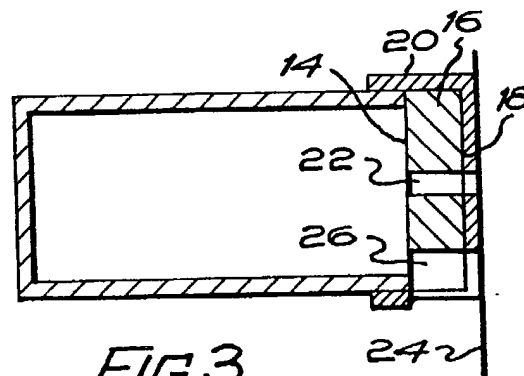


FIG. 2

GB 2 213 360 A

FIG. 1FIG. 2FIG. 3

Improvements relating to a habitat structure for spiders, insects or the like.

This invention relates to a habitat structure for spiders, insects and the like, whereby the life cycle and other evolutionary matters relating to spiders, insects or the like may be examined without disturbing the environment in which the spider or insect breeds and/or develops and without doing any damage to the spiders or insects themselves.

Much scientific and educational interest now surrounds the breeding cycles of insects, and especially spiders, so much so that specialists wish to examine the spiders during the breeding cycle, but he has had to do this by, for example, examining spiders in natural habitats which in fact is anywhere which includes or comprises a dark small cavity. A typical habitat for a spider may be the underside of tree bark, or a crevice in a building or in long grass. It should be mentioned that there are many varieties of spider i.e. of the order of 600, in the United Kingdom and they frequent different habitats of the nature indicated above.

The present invention seeks to provide a habitat structure whereby the breeding of spiders and insects may be observed without destroying or disturbing the surrounding environment of the breeding area.

According to the present invention a habitat structure for a spider or insect comprises a transparent case defining a cavity for the creation of a spider or insect habitat, an opaque cap which can fit over the case and which can be released therefrom, and means defining an exit/entry aperture by which the spider may enter and exit from the said cavity.

Preferably the structure is adapted so as to be capable of

being fixed in position for example on a wall or tree so that the cap can be removed whereby the environment inside the cavity and created by an insect or spider may be examined without disturbing that environment.

Thus, where a spider spins its web and creates a breeding ground for its young, an environment may be created and will tend to be created by the spider in the said cavity, such environment being capable of close examination on a regular basis, in order to monitor the spiders breeding habits and also for example the type of prey which a spider may well consume. If the habitat structure is relatively small, the spider can arrange for its web to be suspended from the structure and any surrounding structure such as a wall or tree to which the habitat structure may be attached.

Experiments with a plurality of these structures have shown that spiders will invariably find their way into the cavities, and once inside the cavities almost invariably make nests as they do appear to find the darkness and warmth of the cavity much to their liking.

The structure may be clipped, screwed or otherwise secured to a support such as a building wall or tree trunk or branch.

Such habitat structures will also be of interest to members of the public in general, as from a naturalist's point of view, it is interesting to watch the progress of the breeding of small insects and spiders.

The cap is preferably a sliding fit on the casing, and the casing may be of cylindrical form closed at one end and connected to a base at the other end by which the structure may be connected to a wall or tree. The base may be provided with a first hole to enable it to be screwed to a tree or

wall, and a second hole providing the said exit/entry means for the spider or other insect.

The cover is preferably of black plastics material and comprising a cylindrical sleeve with one end closed, and which is a neat sliding fit over the casing.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings, wherein:-

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a habitat structure according to the embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a view similar to Fig. 1, but showing the cover removed;

Fig. 3 is a sectional elevation taken through the structure of Fig. 1 to show the exit and entry means and the fixing screw.

Referring to Fig. 2, the habitat structure as shown comprises a cylindrical transparent casing 10 having one end 12 closed, whilst the other end 14 is open (Fig. 3). The casing fits into a base 16 comprising a plate portion 18 and a rim 20 which locates around the open end of the casing 10. The casing 10 preferably is cemented to the base 16 so as to be rigid therewith. An aperture 22 in the centre of the base permits the base to be fixed for example by a screw to a support surface such as a wall or tree 24 (Fig. 3) and a second aperture 26 in the base provides for an exit and entry means for a spider or other insect whereby the spider or insect can enter or leave the interior of the casing which forms a habitat cavity.

As also shown in Fig. 3, the base is normally secured to the support surface so that the exit and entry aperture 26 is to the lower side of the base whereby there will be little or no ingress of moisture and rain, the fixing of the casing 10 to the base 16 ensuring that the open end of the casing is in fact sealed against moisture ingress.

In the fixed condition shown in Fig. 3, it will be seen that an observer can view the interior of the casing 10 to view any breeding activity, and the development and growth of young spiders or insects.

However, in order to ensure that spiders and insects will enter such cavities and breed in same, it is necessary to ensure that the habitat will be kept dark, and to this end the structure includes an opaque cap 30 comprising a cylindrical sleeve 32 and an end plate 34 closing one end of the sleeve. The sleeve can be slipped over the casing 10 as it is a neat sliding fit in relation thereto, so that in the normal position of the structure, the interior of the case will be darkened. The normal utilisation of the structure is shown in Fig. 1.

When it is desired to examine the interior of the casing 10, it is simply a matter of slipping off the cap 30 and examining, and if required, photographing, the interior of the casing 10.

Tests with structures such as those described have been extremely successful and although some insects or spiders take longer to find a habitat than others, generally speaking all of the habitat structures placed in suitable areas have resulted in these habitats being taken up by spiders and insects.

The advantage of the arrangement is that the insects or

spiders need never be interfered with in themselves or in their habitats by the observer who wishes to view the habitat through the casing 10.

CLAIMS

1. A habitat structure for a spider or insect comprises a transparent case defining a cavity for the creation of a spider or insect habitat, an opaque cap which can fit over the case and which can be released therefrom, and means defining an exit/entry aperture by which the spider may enter and exit from the said cavity.
2. A structure according to Claim 1, wherein the structure is adapted so as to be capable of being fixed in position for example on a wall or tree so that the cap can be removed whereby the environment inside the cavity and created by an insect or spider may be examined without disturbing that environment.
3. A structure according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the structure is adapted to be clipped, screwed or otherwise secured to a support such as a building wall tree trunk or branch.
4. A structure according to Claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the cap is a sliding fit on the casing, and the casing may be of cylindrical form closed at one end and connected to a base at the other end by which the structure may be connected to a wall or tree.
5. A structure according to Claim 4, wherein the base is provided with a first hole to enable it to be screwed to a tree or wall, and a second hole providing the said exit/entry means for the spider or other insect.
6. A structure according to Claim 4 or 5, wherein the cover is of black plastics material and comprises a cylindrical sleeve with one end closed, and which is a neat sliding fit



over the casing.

7. A habitat structure for insects substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.